

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 09189 161811Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 161729Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2009

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T LONDON 09189

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UK, EG

SUBJECT: BRITISH ARMS SUPPLY TO EGYPT

REF: LONDON 8945

1. WE SHOWED WEIR TODAY THE WIRELESS FILE REPORT OF STATE DEPARTMENT BRIEFING JUNE 13 RELATING TO BRITISH ARMS SALES TO EGYPT, INQUIRING WHETHER HE HAD ANYTHING TO ADD TO THE INFORMATION REPORTED IN REFTEL. WEIR SAID THAT THE SITUATION WAS STILL AS HE HAD DESCRIBED IT TO AN EMBASSY OFFICER ON JUNE 11. AN AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT IS STILL UNDER NEGOTIATION. A NUMBER OF DETAILS REMAIN TO BE SETTLED AND HAD NOT BEEN RESOLVED BY THE FAHMY VISIT. THE BRITISH HAD GIVEN FAHMY A GOOD DEAL OF INFORMATION WHICH THEY HOPED WOULD BE RESPONSIVE TO INQUIRIES THE EGYPTIANS HAVE MADE UPON TERMS.

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PAGE 02 LONDON 09189 161811Z

2. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES IN

LONDON (PRESUMABLY THE EGYPTIAN EMBASSY) HAVE CONTENTED THAT A POLITICAL GO-AHEAD HAS BEEN GIVEN BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO THE ARMS DEAL. WEIR POINTED OUT THAT THE BRITISH HAVE BEEN RETICENT IN TALKING PUBLICLY ABOUT ARMS SALES. HE NOTED THAT THE FCO HAS TAKEN THE LINE THAT IT IS PREMATURE TO PREDICT CONCLUSION OF AN AGREEMENT AND THAT THE FIGURES CITED IN THE PRESS HAVE BEEN EXAGGERATED. HE ALSO UNDERScoreD THAT THE BRITISH POSITION REMAINS THAT REQUESTS FOR ARMS WILL BE CONSIDERED PROVIDED THEY DO NOT ENDANGER THE ATTAINMENT OF A JUST AND LASTING SETTLEMENT.

3. WEIR CONTINUED THAT FOLLOWING PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT THE CONCLUSION OF AN ARMS DEAL AND REMARKS BY FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN AT THE DINNER FOR FAHMY JUNE 11, THE ISRAELIS HAD SENT A "RUDE" NOTE TO THE BRITISH ABOUT THE PROJECTED SALES. ALTHOUGH THE ISRAELIS SEEM TO BE EXERCISED AT THE PROSPECT OF BRITISH ARMS SALES TO EGYPT, WEIR THOUGHT THEIR PROTEST WAS MAINLY FOR THE RECORD. HE ADDED THAT HMG HAVE KEPT THE ISRAELIS INFORMED ABOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND HE DISMISSED ISRAELI CONCERNS BY SAYING THAT THEY KNOW VERY WELL THAT IT WILL TAKE YEARS FOR ANY EQUIPMENT TO COME OFF PRODUCTION LINES WHICH MAY BE SET UP IN EGYPT.

4. WEIR ATTRIBUTED THE FLURRY OF PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT THE CONCLUSION OF THE DEAL TO ZEAL ON THE PART OF THE PRESS ABETTED BY BRITISH FIRMS WHICH MIGHT PARTICIPATE IN THE DEAL ANXIOUS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY HAVE THE CAPACITY TO CONTRIBUTE HEAVILY TO IMPORTANT EXPORT - SALES.

5. WEIR THOUGHT THE PUBLIC LINE THAT THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN HAD TAKEN ON JUNE 13 WAS JUST ABOUT RIGHT. IF WE WERE PRESSED HE THOUGHT WE COULD REITERATE THE LINE TAKEN BY THE FCO SPOKESMAN; NAMELY, THAT BRITISH POLICY IS TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR ARMS PROVIDED THEY DO NOT ENDANGER ACHIEVEMENT OF A JUST AND LASTING SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THAT ANY ARRANGEMENTS BEING CONSIDERED RELATE TO DEFENSIVE ARMAMENTS.

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PAGE 03 LONDON 09189 161811Z

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## Message Attributes

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**To:** STATE  
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